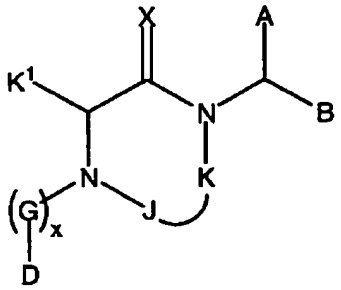
IN THE CLAIMS

The listing of claims herein will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

1. (currently amended) A compound of formula (I):



(I)

and pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof, wherein:

A and B are independently selected from $-CH_2-CH_2-E$ or $-CH_2-CH_2-CH_2-E$;

wherein E is phenyl, furyl, thienyl, pyridyl, pyrrolyl, oxazolyl, thiazolyl, imidazolyl, pyrazolyl, isoxazolyl, triazolyl, oxadiazolyl, pyrimidinyl, pyrazinyl, indolyl, isoindolyl, benzimidazolyl, benzothiophenyl, quinolinyl, isoquinolinyl, and benzothiazolyl;

wherein 1 to 4 hydrogen atoms in E are optionally and independently replaced with halogen, hydroxyl, hydroxymethyl, nitro, SO_3H, trifluoromethyl, trifluoromethoxy, (C_1-C_6)-straight or branched alkyl, (C_2-C_6)-straight or branched alkenyl, O-[(C_1-C_6)-straight or branched alkyl], O-[(C_3-C_6)-straight or branched alkenyl], $(CH_2)_n-N(R^4)(R^5)$, $(CH_2)_n-NH(R^4)-(CH_2)_n-Z$, $(CH_2)_n-N(R^4-(CH_2)_n-Z)(R^5-(CH_2)_n-Z)$, $(CH_2)_n-Z$, $O-(CH_2)_n-Z$, $(CH_2)_n-O-Z$, $S-(CH_2)_n-Z$, CH=CH-Z, 1,2-methylenedioxy, C(O)OH, C(O)O-[(C_1-C_6)-straight or branched alkyl], $C(O)O-(CH_2)_n-Z$ or $C(O)-N(R^4)(R^5)$;

wherein each of R^4 and R^5 are independently hydrogen, (C_1-C_6)-straight or branched alkyl, (C_3-C_5)-straight or branched alkenyl, or wherein R^4 and R^5, when bound to the same nitrogen atom, are taken together with the nitrogen atom to form a 5 or 6 membered ring, wherein said ring optionally contains 1 to 3 additional heteroatoms independently selected from N, O or S; wherein said alkyl, alkenyl or alkynyl groups in R_4 and R_5 are optionally substituted with Z.

each n is independently 0 to 4;

each Z is independently selected from a saturated, partially saturated or unsaturated, monocyclic or bicyclic ring system, wherein each ring comprises 5 to 7 ring atoms independently selected from C, N, O or S; and wherein no more than 4 ring atoms are selected from N, O or S;

wherein 1 to 4 hydrogen atoms in Z are optionally and independently replaced with halo, hydroxy, nitro, cyano, C(O)OH, (C_1-C_3)-straight or branched alkyl, O-(C_1-C_3)-straight or branched alkyl, C(O)O-[(C_1-C_3)-straight or branched alkyl], amino, NH[(C_1-C_3)-straight or branched alkyl], or N-[(C_1-C_3)-straight or branched alkyl]$_2$;

K^1 is selected from hydrogen, E, (C_1-C_6)-straight or branched alkyl, (C_2-C_6)-straight or branched alkenyl or alkynyl, wherein 1 to 2 hydrogen atoms in said alkyl, alkenyl or alkynyl is optionally and independently replaced with E;

wherein K^1 is optionally substituted with up to 3 substituents selected from halogen, OH, O-(C_1-C_6)-alkyl, O-(CH_2)n-Z, NO_2, CO_2H, C(O)-O-(C_1-C_6)-alkyl, $C(O)NR^4R^5$, NR^4R^5 and $(CH_2)_n$-Z;

J and K, taken together with the two nitrogens that they are attached to, form a 6 membered piperazine

G, when present, is -$S(O)_2$-, -C(O)-, -$S(O)_2$-Y-, -C(O)-Y-, -C(O)-C(O)-, or -C(O)-C(O)-Y-;

Y is oxygen, or $N(R^6)$;

wherein R^6 is hydrogen, E, (C_1-C_6)-straight or branched alkyl, (C_3-C_6)-straight or branched alkenyl or alkynyl;

D is (C_1-C_7)-straight or branched alkyl, (C_2-C_7)-straight or branched alkenyl or alkynyl, (C_5-C_7)-cycloalkyl or cycloalkenyl optionally substituted with (C_1-C_6)-straight or branched alkyl or (C_2-C_7)-straight or branched alkenyl or alkynyl, [(C_1-C_7)-alkyl]-E, or [(C_2-C_7)-alkenyl or alkynyl]-E~~, or~~ ;

D is an aromatic monocyclic or bicyclic ring system, wherein each ring comprises 5 to 7 ring atoms independently selected from C, N, O or S; and wherein no more than 4 ring atoms are selected from N, O or S;

wherein 1 to 2 of the CH_2 groups of said alkyl, alkenyl or alkynyl chains in D is optionally replaced by –O-, -S-, -S(O)-, -$S(O_2)$-, or –$N(R^3)$;

x = 0 or 1; and

X = O or two hydrogens attached to ring carbon.

2. (previously presented) The compound according to claim 1, wherein:

each of A and B is independently selected from -CH_2-CH_2-E or –CH_2–CH_2-CH_2-E; and

E is phenyl;

wherein 1 to 4 hydrogen atoms in E are optionally and independently replaced with halogen, hydroxyl, hydroxymethyl, nitro, SO_3H, trifluoromethyl, trifluoromethoxy, (C_1-C_6)-straight or branched alkyl, (C_2-C_6)-straight or branched alkenyl, O-[(C_1-C_6)-straight or branched alkyl], O-[(C_3-C_6)-straight or branched alkenyl], $(CH_2)_n$-$N(R^4)(R^5)$, $(CH_2)_n$-$NH(R^4)$-$(CH_2)_n$-Z, $(CH_2)_n$-$N(R^4$-$(CH_2)_n$-Z)$(R^5$-$(CH_2)_n$-Z), $(CH_2)_n$-Z, O-$(CH_2)_n$-Z, $(CH_2)_n$-O-Z, S-$(CH_2)_n$-Z, CH=CH-Z, 1,2-methylenedioxy, C(O)OH, or C(O)-$N(R^4)(R^5)$.

3. (canceled).

4. (previously presented) The compound according to claim 2, wherein D is substituted phenyl.

5. (previously presented) The compound according to claim 1, wherein K^1 is selected from E, (C_1-C_6)-straight or branched alkyl, (C_2-C_6)-straight or branched alkenyl or alkynyl, wherein 1 to 2 hydrogen atoms in said alkyl, alkenyl or alkynyl is optionally and independently replaced with E;

wherein K^1 is substituted with up to 3 substituents selected from halogen, OH, O-(C_1-C_6)-alkyl, O-(CH_2)n-Z, NO_2, CO_2H, C(O)-O-(C_1-C_6)-alkyl, $C(O)NR^4R^5$, NR^4R^5 and $(CH_2)_n$-Z.

6. (previously presented) The compound according to claim 1, wherein each of A and B is independently selected from -CH_2-CH_2-E or –CH_2–CH_2-CH_2-E; and

E is pyridyl.

7. (previously presented) A composition comprising a compound according to claim 1 and a carrier.

8. (canceled).

9. (canceled).

10. (canceled).

11. (currently amended) A method for stimulating neuronal regeneration or treating ~~preventing~~ neuronal damage or neurodegeneration in a patient or in an *ex vivo* nerve cell, comprising the step of administering to said patient or said nerve cell a therapeutically effective amount of compound according to any one of claims 1-6.

12. (previously presented) The method according to claim 11, wherein said compound is administered to a patient in a therapeutically effective amount and is formulated together with a pharmaceutically suitable carrier into a pharmaceutically acceptable composition.

13. (canceled).

14. (canceled).

15. (canceled).

16. (canceled).

17. (canceled).

18. (canceled).

19. (canceled).

20. (canceled).